

Message Text

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APPROVED BY NEA:ALATHERTON, JR.
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TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 288648

NODIS
FOR THE AMBASSADOR ONLY FROM ATHERTON

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PINT, PINR, EG, XF

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON DRAFT MEMORANDUM:
"CONSEQUENCES OF A MOVE BY SADAT TO MAKE A SEPARATE PEACE
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5. THE LEVEL OF POLITICAL RISK FOR SADAT WOULD INCREASE AS HE MOVED FROM THE FIRST TO THE FOURTH OF THESE APPROACHES. FOR THE MOMENT, SADAT SEEMS TO HAVE CALCULATED -- CORRECTLY, IN OUR VIEW -- THAT HE MUST FIRST EXPLORE TO THE FULLEST THE POSSIBILITY OF A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON A PALESTINIAN SETTLEMENT.

6. ASSUMING THAT THIS IS SADAT'S APPROACH, THE ISSUE TO BE ANALYZED IS WHAT THE CONSEQUENCES WILL BE IF SADAT TRIES FOR A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT BUT FAILS AND DECIDES TO GO AHEAD WITH A SEPARATE PEACE.

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DESIGNED TO AVOID UNDERCUTTING HIS POSITION EITHER DOMESTICALLY OR IN THE BROADER ARAB CONTEXT BY MOVING TOO QUICKLY TOWARD A SEPARATE ARRANGEMENT. BY PERSEVERING IN HIS DETERMINATION TO DEAL DIRECTLY WITH ISRAEL AND BY AT THE SAME TIME SETTING FORTH POSITIONS WHICH PROTECT ARAB DEMANDS, HE PLACES THE BURDEN ON THE ISRAELIS TO MAKE CONCESSIONS THAT DEMONSTRATE THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE

PROCESS. HE HAS INSISTED THAT FIRST PRIORITY IN THE DISCUSSIONS WITH ISRAEL BE GIVEN TO THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE. IF HE CAN GET ISRAEL TO AGREE ULTIMATELY TO WITHDRAW FROM THE WEST BANK (WITH CERTAIN ARRANGEMENTS AIMED AT MEETING ISRAELI SECURITY CONCERNS), HE HAS THE MAIN ELEMENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT. IF THE PLO STILL REFUSES, AND IF SYRIA DECLINES TO NEGOTIATE ON GOLAN, SADAT WOULD THEN HAVE THE OPTIONS EITHER OF DRAWING JORDAN INTO A WEST BANK-JORDAN-ISRAEL SETTLEMENT OR OF SAYING THAT HE HAD DONE EVERYTHING POSSIBLE FOR PEACE AND MOVING ON TO A SEPARATE EGYPT-ISRAEL SETTLEMENT. THIS SCENARIO IS DEPENDENT ON ISRAELI WILLINGNESS TO MAKE CONCESSIONS REGARDING THE WEST BANK.

8. IN ADDITION TO ITS EFFECTS WITHIN THE ARAB ORLD, A BASIC QUESTION CONCERNING SADAT'S STRATEGY IS WHETHER IT WILL ENABLE HIM TO SURVIVE WHATEVER OPPOSITION MIGHT BE GENERATED IN EGYPT BY A MOVE TOWARD A SEPARATE DEAL WITH ISRAEL. THE DEGREE TO WHICH THIS OPPOSITION WOULD BE LIKELY TO INFECT THE ARMED FORCES AND THUS ENDANGER THE REGIME WILL DEPEND LARGELY ON WHAT PRECEDES HIS SHIFT FROM A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT TO A SEPARATE DEAL.

9. IN ESSENCE, IF SADAT CAN SHOW THAT HE HAS RECEIVED CONCESSIONS FROM ISRAEL THAT ARE MEANINGFUL IN A PAN-ARAB
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CONTEXT, ESPECIALLY AS REGARDS THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE, AND IF SYRIA AND REPRESENTATIVE PALESTINIANS THEN REFUSE TO JOIN THE NEGOTIATIONS, SADAT COULD PROBABLY JUSTIFY TO THE EGYPTIAN PEOPLE, INCLUDING THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP, AN ATTEMPT TO STRIKE A SEPARATE DEAL. IN THE ABSENCE OF SUCH ISRAELI CONCESSIONS, IT BECOMES VERY DIFFICULT TO PREDICT THE REACTION TO A BILATERAL AGREEMENT; ELEMENTS OF THE ARMED FORCES OBVIOUSLY WOULD BE TORN BETWEEN BEING ABLE TO RECOVER THE SINAI WITHOUT A WAR FOR WHICH THEY ARE ILL-PREPARED, ON THE ONE HAND, AND BEING HELD UP TO THE CREDIBLE CHARGE OF ABANDONING THE WIDER ARAB STRUGGLE, ON THE OTHER.

10. MUCH WOULD DEPEND ON THE POSTURE ADOPTED BY SAUDI ARABIA. AS OF NOW, THE SAUDIS HAVE THREATENED TO CURTAIL ASSISTANCE TO EGYPT SHOULD SADAT SEEK A SEPARATE DEAL. THAT POSITION MAY CHANGE SHOULD SYRIA AND APPROPRIATE PALESTINIANS, GIVEN A CHANCE TO NEGOTIATE WITH AN ISRAEL PERCEIVED AS READY TO MAKE SERIOUS CONCESSIONS, FAIL TO

SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY. SIGNS THAT ISRAEL WERE READY TO NEGOTIATE SERIOUSLY WOULD ALSO INCREASE THE LIKELIHOOD THAT THE SAUDIS WOULD WEIGH IN WITH THE SYRIANS AND THE FATAH LEADERSHIP IN SUPPORT OF NEGOTIATIONS, SOMETHING THE SAUDIS COULD PROBABLY NOT DO IN THE ABSENCE OF MEANINGFUL GESTURES FROM ISRAEL. THUS THE CRUCIAL ELEMENT IN SAUDI CALCULATIONS IS THE WILLINGNESS OF ISRAEL TO OFFER MEANINGFUL CONCESSIONS APPLICABLE TO SYRIA AND THE PALESTINIANS. WITHOUT SUCH CONCESSIONS, SAUDI PRESSURE ON SYRIA AND THE PALESTINIANS TO JOIN THE PEACE PROCESS WILL PROBABLY NOT OCCUR.

11. SHOULD SAUDI ARABIA ABANDON SADAT, HOWEVER, THIS WOULD LEGITIMIZE EGYPT'S OSTRACIZATION BY OTHER ARAB STATES AND, IN LIGHT OF EGYPT'S ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE ON SAUDI ARABIA, COULD INCREASE THE LIKELIHOOD THAT THE

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ARMED FORCES, EITHER DIRECTLY OR AS A BY-PRODUCT OF DEALING WITH PUBLIC UNREST, WOULD MOVE TO UNSEAT THE REGIME. AT THE VERY LEAST, THE MILITARY IN SUCH A SITUATION WOULD INTENSIFY ITS INSISTENCE THAT THE MILITARY OPTION BE PURSUED AND, PROBABLY, THAT AN ATTEMPT BE MADE TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION.

12. CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE US. WE HAVE TWO RELATED SETS OF CONCERNS: ONE IS WHETHER A SEPARATE PEACE CAN BE LEGITIMIZED AND IF SO HOW; THE SECOND DEALS WITH THE ISSUE OF WHETHER A SEPARATE DEAL WOULD BE STABILIZING OR DESTABILIZING IN THE MIDDLE EAST AS A WHOLE.

13. THE PRINCIPAL ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF A SEPARATE EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI AGREEMENT IS THAT IT IS BETTER THAN NO AGREEMENT AT ALL. IF THERE IS NO AGREEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST OVER THE NEXT YEAR OR SO, TENSIONS COULD BE EXPECTED TO RISE IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF THREATS, RECRIMINATIONS AND MILITARY PREPARATIONS REMINISCENT OF THE SEVERAL MONTHS BEFORE THE 1973 WAR. WHILE A SEPARATE DEAL WOULD NOT REMOVE ALL POSSIBILITY OF ANOTHER WAR, DUE TO PROVOCATIONS BY REJECTIONIST ELEMENTS, WITH EGYPT OUT OF THE ACTION THE DANGER OF A WAR THAT THREATENED ISRAEL'S EXISTENCE WOULD BE ELIMINATED, UNLESS THERE WERE A CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT IN EGYPT THAT REPUDIATED THE AGREEMENT. AN ARAB WORLD SPLIT ON EGYPT-REJECTIONIST LINES WOULD, WE BELIEVE, ALSO HAVE FAR MORE TROUBLE IN ORGANIZING A CONSENSUS FOR ACTION TO HURT THE US, SUCH AS AN OIL EMBARGO.

14. THE SECOND ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF A SEPARATE AGREEMENT IS THAT IT COULD OPEN THE WAY TOWARD A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT. THIS ARGUMENT CUTS BOTH WAYS. ON THE ONE
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HAND, IF EGYPT MAKES PEACE WITH ISRAEL, THEREBY REMOVING ITS MILITARY POTENTIAL FROM THE CONFLICT, HOW LONG COULD THE OTHERS STAND ASIDE? IT IS AT LEAST POSSIBLE THAT, OVER TIME, AGREEMENTS CAN BE WORKED OUT WITH SYRIA AND THE PALESTINIANS AS WELL. ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE IS A STRONG LIKELIHOOD THAT ISRAEL, HAVING NEUTRALIZED ITS LARGEST AND MOST DANGEROUS OPPONENT, WOULD HAVE LITTLE INCENTIVE TO WITHDRAW FROM THE GOLAN AND THE WEST BANK.

15. THE REAL DANGER IS FROM THE GATHERING STRENGTH OVER TIME OF A DISRUPTIVE REJECTIONIST COALITION THAT MIGHT EVENTUALLY BRING DOWN MODERATE GOVERNMENTS IN SYRIA AND JORDAN AND PERHAPS EVENTUALLY IN SAUDI ARABIA AND THE OTHER GULF OIL PRODUCERS. THAT PROPOSITION, HOWEVER, WARRANTS EXAMINATION.

16. THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM HAS IT THAT A SEPARATE DEAL WOULD HAVE A DISRUPTIVE EFFECT IN EGYPT AND IN THE MIDDLE EAST AS A WHOLE.

--A SPLIT IN THE ARAB WORLD BETWEEN REJECTIONISTS AND

EGYPT COULD PROVIDE A POTENT RALLYING POINT FOR SADAT'S DOMESTIC OPPONENTS AT EITHER END OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM TO TRY TO BRING HIM DOWN.

--SAUDI ARABIA WOULD CUT OFF ITS SUBSIDY TO EGYPT, PUTTING SADAT'S REGIME IN GRAVE PERIL BECAUSE OF POPULAR DISCONTENT OVER ECONOMIC MISERY.

--A SEPARATE EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI AGREEMENT WOULD RAISE VAST EXPECTATIONS OF ECONOMIC BETTERMENT AMONG THE EGYPTIAN MASSES. COULD THESE BE MET WITHIN ANY REASONABLE TIME, EVEN WITH CONTINUED SAUDI ASSISTANCE AND INCREASED AMERICAN AID? SADAT COULD REDUCE HIS MILITARY SPENDING SOMEWHAT AND CUT THE SIZE OF THE
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ARMY, BUT INITIALLY AT LEAST THAT WOULD ONLY ADD TO UNEMPLOYMENT?

--THE REJECTIONIST ELEMENTS WOULD UNDERTAKE A CAMPAIGN TO ASSASSINATE MODERATE LEADERS AND FOMENT DISCONTENT. IF PROVOCATIONS LED TO RENEWED HOSTILITIES WITH ISRAEL, SADAT MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO SIT ON THE SIDELINES WHILE HIS ARAB BRETHREN WERE BEING CHEWED UP BY ISRAEL.

--SYRIA WOULD BE UNWILLING TO ACCEPT EGYPTIAN LEADERSHIP AND WOULD JOIN FORCES WITH THE REJECTIONISTS.

--THE USSR WOULD FEEL CUT OUT AND WOULD SUPPORT THE PALESTINIANS AND OTHER ARAB RADICALS, NOW INCLUDING

SYRIA. HOPES FOR A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT WOULD FADE IN A NEW ERA OF MIDDLE EASTERN POLARIZATION AND INSTABILITY. WITHOUT ANY PROSPECTS OF A GENEVA CONFERENCE, THE SOVIETS WOULD BE FREE TO GO THEIR OWN TROUBLE-MAKING WAY.

--THE US WOULD NOT ONLY FIND ITSELF ALLIED WITH ISRAEL AND AN EGYPT ISOLATED FROM MOST, IF NOT ALL, OF THE ARAB WORLD, BUT IT WOULD HAVE TO TRY TO PICK UP THE ECONOMIC TAB IN AN EGYPT ABANDONED BY THE SAUDIS AND WOULD CONFRONT EVEN LARGER MILITARY REQUESTS FROM ISRAEL AS REGIONAL TENSIONS MOUNTED.

17. THERE ARE COUNTERVAILING CONSIDERATIONS, HOWEVER:

--THE SAUDIS ARE MOST RELUCTANT TO SUPPORT A REJECTIONIST COALITION AND WOULD FEEL OBLIGED TO SUPPORT SADAT
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AS AN ANCHOR AGAINST THE RADICAL THREAT TO THEM. EVEN LESS WOULD THEY WISH TO SEE SADAT'S REPLACEMENT BY A LESS PRAGMATIC REGIME IN CAIRO ITSELF. FURTHERMORE, ANY EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT IS NOT WITHOUT ITS OWN ASSETS FOR PUTTING PRESSURE ON THE SAUDI REGIME.

--THE SYRIANS WOULD THROW IN THEIR LOT WITH A REJECTIONIST COALITION ONLY WITH THE GREATEST RELUCTANCE: THEY WOULD BEAR THE FULLBRUNT OF ANY RESUMED HOSTILITIES WITH ISRAEL, AND IN PEACE, WITHOUT EGYPT, THEY WOULD HAVE MUCH LESS LEVERAGE FOR ATTAINING THEIR OBJECTIVES THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS. IN ADDITION, THE SAUDIS WOULD WORK TO KEEP SYRIA OUT OF THIS GROUP, AND SADAT ALSO CAN PUT PRESSURE ON SYRIA -- THROUGH LEBANON, FOR EXAMPLE, AS HE DID PRIOR TO THE OCTOBER 1976 SUMMIT. WITHIN SYRIA THERE WOULD BE SOME IN THE SYRIAN ARMED FORCES INCLINED TO FOLLOW THE EGYPTIAN LEAD IN NEGOTIATING AN ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM THE GOLAN HEIGHTS.

--THE REJECTIONIST ALLIANCE CANNOT DO MUCH TO EGYPT AS LONG AS THE SAUDIS BACK SADAT.

--THE SOVIETS, DESPITE THEIR VIEW OF THE EGYPTIAN INITIATIVE, ARE NOT EAGER FOR A DANGEROUS RISE IN TENSIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST. ANOTHER WAR DOES NOT SEEM TO BE A PART OF THEIR "GAME PLAN," AND THEY ARE ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT THE REPERCUSSIONS OF PROBLEMS WITH THE US IN THE MIDDLE EAST ON OTHER ASPECTS OF THE

U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONSHIP. THUS WHILE THE SOVIETS MIGHT NOT BE EXPECTED TO WORK AGAINST A REJECTIONIST FRONT, THEY WOULD PROBABLY NOT THROW THEIR FULL WEIGHT IN SUPPORT OF IT EITHER.

18. ANALYTICAL CONCLUSIONS: IF SADAT WERE TO PURSUE THE BILATERAL ROUTE TO ITS FINAL CONCLUSION, ONE CAN POSIT

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TWO BASIC, DIVERGENT SCENARIOS: ONE, IN WHICH THE REJECTIONIST IMPULSE GATHERS STEAM THROUGHOUT THE MIDDLE EAST, CAUSING THE SAUDIS TO ABANDON SADAT AND FINALLY BRINGING ABOUT SEVERE PRESSURES WITHIN EGYPT AND EVEN SADAT'S OVERTHROW; THE OTHER IN WHICH THE REJECTIONIST COALITION BEGINS TO CRACK, THE SAUDI-EGYPTIAN CONNECTION HOLDS, THE EGYPTIAN INTERNAL FRONT REMAINS SOLID, AND THE

OTHER PARTIES, SEEING THE TREND SET AGAINST THEM, ENTER INTO NEGOTIATIONS RATHER THAN BE LEFT IN THE COLD WITH ISRAEL. MOMENTUM COULD WELL BUILD IN EITHER DIRECTION.

19. THE TWO SETS OF CONSIDERATIONS GIVEN IN PARAGRAPHS 16 AND 17 ARE SO CLOSELY IN BALANCE, AND INVOLVE SO MANY VARIABLES, THAT IT IS DIFFICULT TO PREDICT CONFIDENTLY WHICH ONE OF THESE SCENARIOS WILL ENSUE. IN ALL PROBABILITY, SADAT HIMSELF IS NOT CERTAIN ABOUT THEM EITHER AND FOR THIS REASON WILL KEEP HIS OPTIONS OPEN FOR AS LONG AS HE CAN. BUT HE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY RECOGNIZE THAT THE TWO KEYS TO HIS SUCCESS ARE (A) HIS DOMESTIC SITUATION AND (B) SAUDI ARABIA. IF THE APPROACH HE FOLLOWS CAN ENSURE SUPPORT ON THESE FRONTS, WE BELIEVE HE WOULD BE PREPARED TO RISK A REJECTIONIST COALITION MOBILIZING AGAINST HIM.

20. THE POSITION OF SAUDI ARABIA THUS BECOMES CRITICAL. SAUDI ACTIONS, IN TURN, WILL BE HEAVILY INFLUENCED BY WHETHER SADAT HAS RECEIVED FROM ISRAEL THE TYPE OF CONCESSIONS THAT WOULD ENABLE THE SAUDIS TO ARGUE PLAUSIBLY THAT SYRIA AND THE PALESTINIANS MISSED THE OPPORTUNITY TO ACHIEVE REALISTIC GOALS. IF SUFFICIENT ISRAELI CONCESSIONS ARE FORTHCOMING AND NEITHER SYRIA NOR THE PALESTINIANS RESPOND, SADAT'S PURSUIT OF A SEPARATE PEACE WOULD STILL CONSTITUTE A RISK, BUT ONE IN WHICH THE CALCULATION CAN BE ASSUMED TO INCLUDE AT LEAST THE GRUDGING CONTINUATION OF SECRET

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SAUDI SUPPORT AND WIDESPREAD SUPPORT AT HOME.

21. EVEN IF SADAT IS UNSUCCESSFUL IN GETTING SUCH ISRAELI CONCESSIONS ON THE OTHER FRONTS, IT CANNOT BE CONCLUDED HE WOULD NOT BE WILLING TO TAKE A CHANCE ON A SEPARATE PEACE AGREEMENT WITH ISRAEL. HE MIGHT BE PREPARED TO TAKE THE GAMBLE THAT THE SAUDIS, DISILLUSIONED AS THEY WOULD BE WITH HIM IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, WOULD NOT IN THE LONG-RUN FIND REJECTIONISM A VIABLE STRATEGY. THE PRESENT DISARRAY

OF REJECTIONIST FORCES (GRANTED SADAT HAS TAKEN BUT A MODEST STEP IN THIS DIRECTION) MAY ENCOURAGE HIM TO BELIEVE HE CAN TAKE THIS RISK.

22. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE SADAT WILL BE AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE--PARTICULARLY IN TERMS OF SAUDI SUPPORT--OF PRODUCING PLAUSIBLE CONCESSIONS ON THE OTHER FRONTS. HE WILL NOT MAKE HIS CHOICE OF ULTIMATE OBJECTIVES UNTIL HE SEES HOW WELL HE IS DOING IN THIS RESPECT.

23. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE U.S.: A MIDDLE EAST SPLIT ALONG EGYPT-REJECTIONIST LINES WOULD OBVIOUSLY NOT BE AS SATIS-

FACTORY TO THE U.S. AS A COMPREHENSIVE PEACE SETTLEMENT, BUT IF SADAT CAN WEATHER THE STORM--AND OUR PRESENT ASSESSMENT IS THAT HE HAS AT LEAST A 50-50 CHANCE OF DOING SO--SUCH A SITUATION WOULD IN OUR JUDGMENT BE A MARKED IMPROVEMENT FOR U.S. INTERESTS OVER ONE OF A CONTINUING NEGOTIATING IMPASSE. WE SHOULD TAKE A CHANCE ON IT IF SADAT IS WILLING TO.

24. IN OUR PUBLIC STATEMENTS WE SHOULD ADHERE CLOSELY TO THE THEME THAT FIRST, OUR OBJECTIVE REMAINS A COMPREHENSIVE PEACE SETTLEMENT AMONG ALL THE PARTIES TO THE DISPUTE, AND SECOND, WE WELCOME ALL CONTACTS AMONG THE PARTIES THAT CONSTITUTE A STEP ALONG THAT ROUTE. WE SHOULD AVOID BEING DRAWN INTO A PUBLIC POSTURE OF RULING OUT A SEPARATE AGREE-
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MENT. TO THE EXTENT THAT SADAT IS PERCEIVED AS DETERMINED TO CONTINUE DOWN THE NEGOTIATING PATH WITH ISRAEL AND TO ENJOY BROAD DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT, SOME PRESSURE WILL BE GENERATED FOR THE SYRIANS AND PALESTINIANS TO REASSESS THEIR ANTI-SADAT POSITIONS. BUT WE SHOULD ALSO AVOID STATEMENTS THAT MIGHT BE INTERPRETED AS FORESHADOWING THAT THE U.S. HAS ALREADY OPTED TO SUPPORT A SEPARATE AGREEMENT. THE SOVIETS, SYRIANS AND THE RADICAL ARABS ALL SUSPECT THAT WE ARE CONSPIRING WITH SADAT AND THE ISRAELIS TO BRING ABOUT A SEPARATE PEACE, AND SUCH SUSPICIONS CAN ONLY MAKE MATTERS MORE DIFFICULT FOR SADAT, EVEN THOUGH HE TENDS TO MINIMIZE SUCH CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE MOMENT. IN OUR PRIVATE DIPLOMACY WE SHOULD COMPORT OURSELVES SO AS NOT TO RESTRICT SADAT'S FREEDOM OF ACTION. WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO KEEP OUR CHANNELS OPEN TO THE SYRIANS AND SOVIETS, BUT WE SHOULD NOT BE WILLING TO PAY MUCH OF A PRICE FOR GETTING THEM BACK INTO THE NEGOTIATIONS AT THIS STAGE IF THINGS ARE MOVING ON THE EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI TRACK. WHILE CONTINUING ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT EFFORTS TO CONVENE A MULTILATERAL NEGOTIATING FORUM ARE CONSONANT WITH EGYPT-ISRAEL CONTACTS, WE SHOULD BE CAREFUL NOT TO GET TOO FAR OUT AHEAD OF EGYPTIAN AND ISRAELI WISHES IN THIS REGARD. VANCE

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DESIGNED TO AVOID UNDERCUTTING HIS POSITION EITHER DOMESTICALLY OR IN THE BROADER ARAB CONTEXT BY MOVING TOO QUICKLY TOWARD A SEPARATE ARRANGEMENT. BY PERSEVERING IN HIS DETERMINATION TO DEAL DIRECTLY WITH ISRAEL AND BY AT THE SAME TIME SETTING FORTH POSITIONS WHICH PROTECT ARAB DEMANDS, HE PLACES THE BURDEN ON THE ISRAELIS TO MAKE CONCESSIONS THAT DEMONSTRATE THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE

PROCESS. HE HAS INSISTED THAT FIRST PRIORITY IN THE DISCUSSIONS WITH ISRAEL BE GIVEN TO THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE. IF HE CAN GET ISRAEL TO AGREE ULTIMATELY TO WITHDRAW FROM THE WEST BANK (WITH CERTAIN ARRANGEMENTS AIMED AT MEETING ISRAELI SECURITY CONCERNS), HE HAS THE MAIN ELEMENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT. IF THE PLO STILL REFUSES, AND IF SYRIA DECLINES TO NEGOTIATE ON GOLAN, SADAT WOULD THEN HAVE THE OPTIONS EITHER OF DRAWING JORDAN INTO A WEST BANK-JORDAN-ISRAEL SETTLEMENT OR OF SAYING THAT HE HAD DONE EVERYTHING POSSIBLE FOR PEACE AND MOVING ON TO A SEPARATE EGYPT-ISRAEL SETTLEMENT. THIS SCENARIO IS DEPENDENT ON ISRAELI WILLINGNESS TO MAKE CONCESSIONS REGARDING THE WEST BANK.

8. IN ADDITION TO ITS EFFECTS WITHIN THE ARAB WORLD, A BASIC QUESTION CONCERNING SADAT'S STRATEGY IS WHETHER IT WILL ENABLE HIM TO SURVIVE WHATEVER OPPOSITION MIGHT BE GENERATED IN EGYPT BY A MOVE TOWARD A SEPARATE DEAL WITH ISRAEL. THE DEGREE TO WHICH THIS OPPOSITION WOULD BE LIKELY TO INFECT THE ARMED FORCES AND THUS ENDANGER THE REGIME WILL DEPEND LARGELY ON WHAT PRECEDES HIS SHIFT FROM A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT TO A SEPARATE DEAL.

9. IN ESSENCE, IF SADAT CAN SHOW THAT HE HAS RECEIVED CONCESSIONS FROM ISRAEL THAT ARE MEANINGFUL IN A PAN-ARAB
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CONTEXT, ESPECIALLY AS REGARDS THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE, AND IF SYRIA AND REPRESENTATIVE PALESTINIANS THEN REFUSE TO JOIN THE NEGOTIATIONS, SADAT COULD PROBABLY JUSTIFY TO THE EGYPTIAN PEOPLE, INCLUDING THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP, AN ATTEMPT TO STRIKE A SEPARATE DEAL. IN THE ABSENCE OF SUCH ISRAELI CONCESSIONS, IT BECOMES VERY DIFFICULT TO PREDICT THE REACTION TO A BILATERAL AGREEMENT; ELEMENTS OF THE ARMED FORCES OBVIOUSLY WOULD BE TORN BETWEEN BEING ABLE TO RECOVER THE SINAI WITHOUT A WAR FOR WHICH THEY ARE ILL-PREPARED, ON THE ONE HAND, AND BEING HELD UP TO THE CREDIBLE CHARGE OF ABANDONING THE WIDER ARAB STRUGGLE, ON THE OTHER.

10. MUCH WOULD DEPEND ON THE POSTURE ADOPTED BY SAUDI ARABIA. AS OF NOW, THE SAUDIS HAVE THREATENED TO CURTAIL ASSISTANCE TO EGYPT SHOULD SADAT SEEK A SEPARATE DEAL. THAT POSITION MAY CHANGE SHOULD SYRIA AND APPROPRIATE PALESTINIANS, GIVEN A CHANCE TO NEGOTIATE WITH AN ISRAEL PERCEIVED AS READY TO MAKE SERIOUS CONCESSIONS, FAIL TO

SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY. SIGNS THAT ISRAEL WERE READY TO NEGOTIATE SERIOUSLY WOULD ALSO INCREASE THE LIKELIHOOD THAT THE SAUDIS WOULD WEIGH IN WITH THE SYRIANS AND THE FATAH LEADERSHIP IN SUPPORT OF NEGOTIATIONS, SOMETHING THE SAUDIS COULD PROBABLY NOT DO IN THE ABSENCE OF MEANINGFUL GESTURES FROM ISRAEL. THUS THE CRUCIAL ELEMENT IN SAUDI CALCULATIONS IS THE WILLINGNESS OF ISRAEL TO OFFER MEANINGFUL CONCESSIONS APPLICABLE TO SYRIA AND THE PALESTINIANS. WITHOUT SUCH CONCESSIONS, SAUDI PRESSURE ON SYRIA AND THE PALESTINIANS TO JOIN THE PEACE PROCESS WILL PROBABLY NOT OCCUR.

11. SHOULD SAUDI ARABIA ABANDON SADAT, HOWEVER, THIS WOULD LEGITIMIZE EGYPT'S OSTRACIZATION BY OTHER ARAB STATES AND, IN LIGHT OF EGYPT'S ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE ON SAUDI ARABIA, COULD INCREASE THE LIKELIHOOD THAT THE
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ARMED FORCES, EITHER DIRECTLY OR AS A BY-PRODUCT OF DEALING WITH PUBLIC UNREST, WOULD MOVE TO UNSEAT THE REGIME. AT THE VERY LEAST, THE MILITARY IN SUCH A SITUATION WOULD INTENSIFY ITS INSISTENCE THAT THE MILITARY OPTION BE PURSUED AND, PROBABLY, THAT AN ATTEMPT BE MADE TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION.

12. CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE US. WE HAVE TWO RELATED SETS OF CONCERNS: ONE IS WHETHER A SEPARATE PEACE CAN BE LEGITIMIZED AND IF SO HOW; THE SECOND DEALS WITH THE ISSUE

OF WHETHER A SEPARATE DEAL WOULD BE STABILIZING OR
DESTABILIZING IN THE MIDDLE EAST AS A WHOLE.

13. THE PRINCIPAL ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF A SEPARATE
EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI AGREEMENT IS THAT IT IS BETTER THAN NO
AGREEMENT AT ALL. IF THERE IS NO AGREEMENT IN THE MIDDLE
EAST OVER THE NEXT YEAR OR SO, TENSIONS COULD BE
EXPECTED TO RISE IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF THREATS, RECRIMINATIONS
AND MILITARY PREPARATIONS REMINISCENT OF THE SEVERAL
MONTHS BEFORE THE 1973 WAR. WHILE A SEPARATE DEAL WOULD
NOT REMOVE ALL POSSIBILITY OF ANOTHER WAR, DUE TO
PROVOCATIONS BY REJECTIONIST ELEMENTS, WITH EGYPT OUT OF
THE ACTION THE DANGER OF A WAR THAT THREATENED ISRAEL'S
EXISTENCE WOULD BE ELIMINATED, UNLESS THERE WERE A CHANGE
OF GOVERNMENT IN EGYPT THAT REPUDIATED THE AGREEMENT. AN
ARAB WORLD SPLIT ON EGYPT-REJECTIONIST LINES WOULD, WE
BELIEVE, ALSO HAVE FAR MORE TROUBLE IN ORGANIZING A
CONSENSUS FOR ACTION TO HURT THE US, SUCH AS AN OIL
EMBARGO.

14. THE SECOND ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF A SEPARATE AGREE-
MENT IS THAT IT COULD OPEN THE WAY TOWARD A COMPREHENSIVE
SETTLEMENT. THIS ARGUMENT CUTS BOTH WAYS. ON THE ONE
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HAND, IF EGYPT MAKES PEACE WITH ISRAEL, THEREBY REMOVING
ITS MILITARY POTENTIAL FROM THE CONFLICT, HOW LONG COULD
THE OTHERS STAND ASIDE? IT IS AT LEAST POSSIBLE THAT,
OVER TIME, AGREEMENTS CAN BE WORKED OUT WITH SYRIA
AND THE PALESTINIANS AS WELL. ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE
IS A STRONG LIKELIHOOD THAT ISRAEL, HAVING NEUTRALIZED
ITS LARGEST AND MOST DANGEROUS OPPONENT, WOULD HAVE LITTLE
INCENTIVE TO WITHDRAW FROM THE GOLAN AND THE WEST BANK.

15. THE REAL DANGER IS FROM THE GATHERING STRENGTH OVER
TIME OF A DISRUPTIVE REJECTIONIST COALITION THAT MIGHT
EVENTUALLY BRING DOWN MODERATE GOVERNMENTS IN SYRIA
AND JORDAN AND PERHAPS EVENTUALLY IN SAUDI ARABIA AND
THE OTHER GULF OIL PRODUCERS. THAT PROPOSITION, HOWEVER,
WARRANTS EXAMINATION.

16. THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM HAS IT THAT A SEPARATE DEAL
WOULD HAVE A DISRUPTIVE EFFECT IN EGYPT AND IN THE MIDDLE
EAST AS A WHOLE.

--A SPLIT IN THE ARAB WORLD BETWEEN REJECTIONISTS AND
EGYPT COULD PROVIDE A POTENT RALLYING POINT FOR SADAT'S
DOMESTIC OPPONENTS AT EITHER END OF THE POLITICAL
SPECTRUM TO TRY TO BRING HIM DOWN.

--SAUDI ARABIA WOULD CUT OFF ITS SUBSIDY TO EGYPT,
PUTTING SADAT'S REGIME IN GRAVE PERIL BECAUSE OF
POPULAR DISCONTENT OVER ECONOMIC MISERY.

--A SEPARATE EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI AGREEMENT WOULD RAISE
VAST EXPECTATIONS OF ECONOMIC BETTERMENT AMONG THE
EGYPTIAN MASSES. COULD THESE BE MET WITHIN ANY
REASONABLE TIME, EVEN WITH CONTINUED SAUDI ASSISTANCE
AND INCREASED AMERICAN AID? SADAT COULD REDUCE HIS
MILITARY SPENDING SOMEWHAT AND CUT THE SIZE OF THE
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ARMY, BUT INITIALLY AT LEAST THAT WOULD ONLY ADD TO
UNEMPLOYMENT?

--THE REJECTIONIST ELEMENTS WOULD UNDERTAKE A CAMPAIGN
TO ASSASSINATE MODERATE LEADERS AND FOMENT DISCONTENT.
IF PROVOCATIONS LED TO RENEWED HOSTILITIES WITH
ISRAEL, SADAT MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO SIT ON THE SIDELINES
WHILE HIS ARAB BRETHREN WERE BEING CHEWED UP BY ISRAEL.

--SYRIA WOULD BE UNWILLING TO ACCEPT EGYPTIAN LEADERSHIP
AND WOULD JOIN FORCES WITH THE REJECTIONISTS.

--THE USSR WOULD FEEL CUT OUT AND WOULD SUPPORT THE
PALESTINIANS AND OTHER ARAB RADICALS, NOW INCLUDING

SYRIA. HOPES FOR A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT WOULD
FADE IN A NEW ERA OF MIDDLE EASTERN POLARIZATION AND
INSTABILITY. WITHOUT ANY PROSPECTS OF A GENEVA
CONFERENCE, THE SOVIETS WOULD BE FREE TO GO THEIR
OWN TROUBLE-MAKING WAY.

--THE US WOULD NOT ONLY FIND ITSELF ALLIED WITH ISRAEL AND
AN EGYPT ISOLATED FROM MOST, IF NOT ALL, OF THE ARAB
WORLD, BUT IT WOULD HAVE TO TRY TO PICK UP THE
ECONOMIC TAB IN AN EGYPT ABANDONED BY THE SAUDIS
AND WOULD CONFRONT EVEN LARGER MILITARY REQUESTS FROM
ISRAEL AS REGIONAL TENSIONS MOUNTED.

17. THERE ARE COUNTERVAILING CONSIDERATIONS,
HOWEVER:

--THE SAUDIS ARE MOST RELUCTANT TO SUPPORT A REJECTIONIST
COALITION AND WOULD FEEL OBLIGED TO SUPPORT SADAT
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AS AN ANCHOR AGAINST THE RADICAL THREAT TO THEM. EVEN LESS WOULD THEY WISH TO SEE SADAT'S REPLACEMENT BY A LESS PRAGMATIC REGIME IN CAIRO ITSELF. FURTHERMORE, ANY EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT IS NOT WITHOUT ITS OWN ASSETS FOR PUTTING PRESSURE ON THE SAUDI REGIME.

--THE SYRIANS WOULD THROW IN THEIR LOT WITH A REJECTIONIST COALITION ONLY WITH THE GREATEST RELUCTANCE: THEY WOULD BEAR THE FULLBRUNT OF ANY RESUMED HOSTILITIES WITH ISRAEL, AND IN PEACE, WITHOUT EGYPT, THEY WOULD HAVE MUCH LESS LEVERAGE FOR ATTAINING THEIR OBJECTIVES THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS. IN ADDITION, THE SAUDIS WOULD WORK TO KEEP SYRIA OUT OF THIS GROUP, AND SADAT ALSO CAN PUT PRESSURE ON SYRIA -- THROUGH LEBANON, FOR EXAMPLE, AS HE DID PRIOR TO THE OCTOBER 1976 SUMMIT. WITHIN SYRIA THERE WOULD BE SOME IN THE SYRIAN ARMED FORCES INCLINED TO FOLLOW THE EGYPTIAN LEAD IN NEGOTIATING AN ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM THE GOLAN HEIGHTS.

--THE REJECTIONIST ALLIANCE CANNOT DO MUCH TO EGYPT AS LONG AS THE SAUDIS BACK SADAT.

--THE SOVIETS, DESPITE THEIR VIEW OF THE EGYPTIAN INITIATIVE, ARE NOT EAGER FOR A DANGEROUS RISE IN TENSIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST. ANOTHER WAR DOES NOT SEEM TO BE A PART OF THEIR "GAME PLAN," AND THEY ARE ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT THE REPERCUSSIONS OF PROBLEMS WITH THE US IN THE MIDDLE EAST ON OTHER ASPECTS OF THE

U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONSHIP. THUS WHILE THE SOVIETS MIGHT NOT BE EXPECTED TO WORK AGAINST A REJECTIONIST FRONT, THEY WOULD PROBABLY NOT THROW THEIR FULL WEIGHT IN SUPPORT OF IT EITHER.

18. ANALYTICAL CONCLUSIONS: IF SADAT WERE TO PURSUE THE BILATERAL ROUTE TO ITS FINAL CONCLUSION, ONE CAN POSIT SECRET

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TWO BASIC, DIVERGENT SCENARIOS: ONE, IN WHICH THE REJECTIONIST IMPULSE GATHERS STEAM THROUGHOUT THE MIDDLE EAST, CAUSING THE SAUDIS TO ABANDON SADAT AND FINALLY BRINGING ABOUT SEVERE PRESSURES WITHIN EGYPT AND EVEN SADAT'S OVERTHROW; THE OTHER IN WHICH THE REJECTIONIST COALITION BEGINS TO CRACK, THE SAUDI-EGYPTIAN CONNECTION HOLDS, THE EGYPTIAN INTERNAL FRONT REMAINS SOLID, AND THE OTHER PARTIES, SEEING THE TREND SET AGAINST THEM, ENTER INTO NEGOTIATIONS RATHER THAN BE LEFT IN THE COLD WITH ISRAEL. MOMENTUM COULD WELL BUILD IN EITHER DIRECTION.

19. THE TWO SETS OF CONSIDERATIONS GIVEN IN PARAGRAPHS 16 AND 17 ARE SO CLOSELY IN BALANCE, AND INVOLVE SO MANY VARIABLES, THAT IT IS DIFFICULT TO PREDICT CONFIDENTLY WHICH ONE OF THESE SCENARIOS WILL ENSUE. IN ALL PROBABILITY, SADAT HIMSELF IS NOT CERTAIN ABOUT THEM EITHER AND FOR THIS REASON WILL KEEP HIS OPTIONS OPEN FOR AS LONG AS HE CAN. BUT HE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY RECOGNIZE THAT THE TWO KEYS TO HIS SUCCESS ARE (A) HIS DOMESTIC SITUATION AND (B) SAUDI ARABIA. IF THE APPROACH HE FOLLOWS CAN ENSURE SUPPORT ON THESE FRONTS, WE BELIEVE HE WOULD BE PREPARED TO RISK A REJECTIONIST COALITION MOBILIZING AGAINST HIM.

20. THE POSITION OF SAUDI ARABIA THUS BECOMES CRITICAL.

SAUDI ACTIONS, IN TURN, WILL BE HEAVILY INFLUENCED BY WHETHER SADAT HAS RECEIVED FROM ISRAEL THE TYPE OF CONCESSIONS THAT WOULD ENABLE THE SAUDIS TO ARGUE PLAUSIBLY THAT SYRIA AND THE PALESTINIANS MISSED THE OPPORTUNITY TO ACHIEVE REALISTIC GOALS. IF SUFFICIENT ISRAELI CONCESSIONS ARE FORTHCOMING AND NEITHER SYRIA NOR THE PALESTINIANS RESPOND, SADAT'S PURSUIT OF A SEPARATE PEACE WOULD STILL CONSTITUTE A RISK, BUT ONE IN WHICH THE CALCULATION CAN BE SECRET

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ASSUMED TO INCLUDE AT LEAST THE GRUDGING CONTINUATION OF SAUDI SUPPORT AND WIDESPREAD SUPPORT AT HOME.

21. EVEN IF SADAT IS UNSUCCESSFUL IN GETTING SUCH ISRAELI CONCESSIONS ON THE OTHER FRONTS, IT CANNOT BE CONCLUDED HE WOULD NOT BE WILLING TO TAKE A CHANCE ON A SEPARATE PEACE AGREEMENT WITH ISRAEL. HE MIGHT BE PREPARED TO TAKE THE GAMBLE THAT THE SAUDIS, DISILLUSIONED AS THEY WOULD BE WITH HIM IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, WOULD NOT IN THE LONG-RUN FIND REJECTIONISM A VIABLE STRATEGY. THE PRESENT DISARRAY

OF REJECTIONIST FORCES (GRANTED SADAT HAS TAKEN BUT A MODEST STEP IN THIS DIRECTION) MAY ENCOURAGE HIM TO BELIEVE HE CAN TAKE THIS RISK.

22. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE SADAT WILL BE AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE--PARTICULARLY IN TERMS OF SAUDI SUPPORT--OF PRODUCING PLAUSIBLE CONCESSIONS ON THE OTHER FRONTS. HE WILL NOT MAKE HIS CHOICE OF ULTIMATE OBJECTIVES UNTIL HE SEES HOW WELL HE IS DOING IN THIS RESPECT.

23. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE U.S.: A MIDDLE EAST SPLIT ALONG EGYPT-REJECTIONIST LINES WOULD OBVIOUSLY NOT BE AS SATISFACTORY TO THE U.S. AS A COMPREHENSIVE PEACE SETTLEMENT, BUT IF SADAT CAN WEATHER THE STORM--AND OUR PRESENT

ASSESSMENT IS THAT HE HAS AT LEAST A 50-50 CHANCE OF DOING SO--SUCH A SITUATION WOULD IN OUR JUDGMENT BE A MARKED IMPROVEMENT FOR U.S. INTERESTS OVER ONE OF A CONTINUING NEGOTIATING IMPASSE. WE SHOULD TAKE A CHANCE ON IT IF SADAT IS WILLING TO.

24. IN OUR PUBLIC STATEMENTS WE SHOULD ADHERE CLOSELY TO THE THEME THAT FIRST, OUR OBJECTIVE REMAINS A COMPREHENSIVE PEACE SETTLEMENT AMONG ALL THE PARTIES TO THE DISPUTE, AND SECOND, WE WELCOME ALL CONTACTS AMONG THE PARTIES THAT CONSTITUTE A STEP ALONG THAT ROUTE. WE SHOULD AVOID BEING
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DRAWN INTO A PUBLIC POSTURE OF RULING OUT A SEPARATE AGREEMENT. TO THE EXTENT THAT SADAT IS PERCEIVED AS DETERMINED TO CONTINUE DOWN THE NEGOTIATING PATH WITH ISRAEL AND TO ENJOY BROAD DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT, SOME PRESSURE WILL BE GENERATED FOR THE SYRIANS AND PALESTINIANS TO REASSESS THEIR ANTI-SADAT POSITIONS. BUT WE SHOULD ALSO AVOID STATEMENTS THAT MIGHT BE INTERPRETED AS FORESHADOWING THAT THE U.S. HAS ALREADY OPTED TO SUPPORT A SEPARATE AGREEMENT. THE SOVIETS, SYRIANS AND THE RADICAL ARABS ALL SUSPECT THAT WE ARE CONSPIRING WITH SADAT AND THE ISRAELIS TO BRING ABOUT A SEPARATE PEACE, AND SUCH SUSPICIONS CAN ONLY MAKE MATTERS MORE DIFFICULT FOR SADAT, EVEN THOUGH HE TENDS TO MINIMIZE SUCH CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE MOMENT. IN OUR PRIVATE DIPLOMACY WE SHOULD COMPORT OURSELVES SO AS NOT TO RESTRICT SADAT'S FREEDOM OF ACTION. WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO KEEP OUR CHANNELS OPEN TO THE SYRIANS AND SOVIETS, BUT WE SHOULD NOT BE WILLING TO PAY MUCH OF A PRICE FOR GETTING THEM BACK INTO THE NEGOTIATIONS AT THIS STAGE IF THINGS ARE MOVING ON THE EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI TRACK. WHILE CONTINUING ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT EFFORTS TO CONVENE A MULTILATERAL NEGOTIATING FORUM ARE CONSONANT WITH EGYPT-ISRAEL CONTACTS, WE SHOULD BE CAREFUL NOT TO GET TOO FAR OUT AHEAD OF EGYPTIAN AND ISRAELI WISHES IN THIS REGARD. VANCE UNQUOTE VANCE

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